



California Department of Veterans Affairs

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEGISLATION WILL ENSURE TIMELY PROGRESS ON STATE VETERANS HOMES

SACRAMENTO – State Sen. Sam Aanestad (Redding) will amend legislation to ensure the California State Veterans Home Capital Construction Project stays on track and moves ahead toward the ultimate completion of five new veterans homes in Redding, Fresno, Los Angeles, Lancaster and Ventura.

"California has made a commitment to the more than 2.2 million veterans in this state that they would be getting five new veterans homes to serve them," said Tom Johnson, Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs. "This legislation honors that commitment and ensures all five homes stay on their projected timelines."

"I am please to work with Secretary Johnson to ensure that funding will be there for the construction of the five veterans homes in the department's capitol construction project and that these homes will be built on time, without delay", said Senator Sam Aanestad. "The promise we made to veterans in California should be honored and I will make very effort to make sure the veterans homes are completed."

The legislation (SB 630) will include a provision which allocates \$30 million to cover the unanticipated construction costs that the Department realized when it opened the bids for the three planned Southern California Veterans Homes in West Los Angeles, Ventura and Lancaster. The bids came in approximately \$35 million over what the department estimated it would cost to build these homes.

The California Legislature in 2002 authorized the California Department of Veterans Affairs to build five new veterans homes in underserved areas, which were identified as Los Angeles, Lancaster, Ventura, Redding and Fresno. In 2004 the Legislature approved more than \$100 million to cover the state's share of the construction costs associated with the new homes. If approved, this legislation would allow the state to keep the five-home capital construction project on track and meet the projected timelines.

The legislation is needed since increased construction costs have plagued all major public and private projects in this country as the demand for basic building materials has increased significantly worldwide over the past few years. Those additional costs are especially seen in things as basic as the concrete and steel that are needed to make the veterans homes meet strict seismic standards.

"By moving forward with all the homes on the existing time-line, the state will likely avoid significant future increases in construction costs associated with inflationary pressure on basic building materials," Johnson said.

These projects are being developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs through its State Home Grant Program which finances up to 65 percent of construction costs for state veterans homes. California has been identified by the USDVA as an underserved state in great need of additional veterans home beds and has ranked the California Veterans Home projects as "priority-one" projects when it awards those state home grants.

The state currently has only three veterans homes that serve approximately 1,700 veterans in various levels of care. These homes are located in Yountville in the Napa Valley, Barstow in San Bernardino County, and Chula Vista in San Diego County. They provide basic Residential care (room and board for those veterans who don't need special care), Residential Care for the Elderly (for those veterans who may need help with things like medication, getting dressed, etc.) and full Skilled Nursing Facility care (for those veterans who need 24-hour nursing care).

These new homes will add an estimated 966 new residences for the state's most needy veterans and will help the department provide the needed care for those aged and disabled veterans who live here in California and need the assistance of a state veterans home. This building project also includes an expansion of services for those veterans who are in most need – those who suffer from Alzheimer's and related dementias.

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